



Holiday Travelers Wonder: How Accurate are Airport Luggage Scales?

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MADISON – Airline passengers pay to check their luggage, and the cost goes up substantially if the bags are overweight. This holiday travel season, Wisconsin travelers can be confident that the state's airline baggage scales measure up.

"We checked every airport scale in the state, and travelers can have a high level of confidence that their bags are being weighed accurately," said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator of Trade and Consumer Protection. "Excess weight charges run from \$39 to \$400 for each bag over 50 pounds, so consumers want to know those scales are correct."

Wisconsin weights and measures inspectors and city sealers inspected each of the 60 luggage scales in the state's commercial airports and found an accuracy rate of 98.3 percent. All scales that were not working properly have been repaired.

The inspections were conducted throughout 2011 at airports in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Appleton, La Crosse, Mosinee, Eau Claire and Rhineland.

Only one scale was found to weigh inaccurately in favor of the airline, at Mitchell Field in Milwaukee. The scale's platform came in contact with the side of the scale during weighing, which increased the weight indication. Following repairs, the scale was re-inspected and found accurate.

Another seven scales around the state were rejected or ordered to be repaired for reasons other than accuracy. For instance, scales were not security sealed, the weight indicator was not visible to the customer, the scale was not marked correctly, or the scale was not functioning at all.

"Weights and measures inspectors and city sealers are working each day to check small and large scales for accuracy in airports, stores and many other locations," added Chalmers. "We are working to protect consumers from overcharges to guarantee they get what they are paying for each time they buy or fly."

DATCP offers these tips for airport-bound travelers:

- Weigh your luggage before you leave home.
- Ask to have your luggage weighed on a different scale if you suspect an inaccurate reading.
- Be prepared to transfer items to a different bag in case your luggage is found overweight at the airport.
- Verify the scale indicator is at zero before you place your luggage on the scale. Airlines are required to have the scale indicator visible to customers.
- Check the platform to ensure it is not in contact with the side of the scale.

If you find a scale that is weighing inaccurately, file a complaint at datcp.wisconsin.gov; via e-mail at datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov; or call toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

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